

**Minutes**  
**Catawba County Board of Commissioners**  
**Special Session**  
**Thursday, June 2, 2011, 7:00 p.m.**

**Budget**

Budget Public Hearing and Wrap Up

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The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in Special Session on Thursday, June 2, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the 1924 Courthouse, Robert E. Hibbitts Meeting Room, 30 North College Avenue, Newton, North Carolina. The purpose of the special meeting was for a budget hearing for public comment on the proposed County budget for Fiscal Year 2011/12.

Present were Chair Katherine W. Barnes, Vice-Chair Lynn M. Lail and Commissioners Dan Hunsucker, Randy Isenhower and Barbara G. Beatty.

Also present were County Manager J. Thomas Lundy and Budget Manager Jennifer Mace.

1. Chair Katherine W. Barnes called the special meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Vice-Chair Lynn M. Lail led the Pledge to Allegiance to the Flag.
3. Commissioner Dan Hunsucker offered the Invocation.

Chair Barnes noted that budget hearings with County departments and outside agencies took place on Tuesday, May 31, 2011 and the purpose of this meeting was to conduct a public hearing to receive citizen comments on the proposed budget. She then opened the public hearing and asked for anyone who wished to speak to come forward.

Clarence Hood – Sigmon Dairy Road – Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Board.

Mr. Hood thanked the Board for its public service and for its support of Cooperative Extension. He noted that one of the tasks of the Agricultural Advisory Board was to advise the Board of Commissioners on issues that would affect the Voluntary Agricultural Districts. He went on to state that a reduction in force in the Cooperative Extension Office would have a negative effect on the farming community. He outlined the services the Extension provides and complimented Jeff Carpenter's efforts and urged the Board to include the funding necessary to staff the Extension fully in the budget.

John Gladden, 4789 Plateau Road, Vale – President of Farm Bureau

Mr. Gladden indicated he had spoken with Commissioners before the meeting and had been assured that they were well aware of how important the Cooperative Extension positions at issue were to serving the County's farm community. He thanked the Board for its leadership.

After no one further came forward to speak, Chair Barnes closed the public hearing.

Chair Barnes then asked Mr. Lundy to review the proposed changes to the budget based on budget hearings. Mr. Lundy summarized that Cooperative Extension has been conservative with their budgeted dollars and had built up a fund balance that the Cooperative Extension Director had flexibility and discretion to use – and could create or fill a position using those funds. Mr. Lundy went on to say that Cooperative Extension provided a valuable service and management would work with Jeff Carpenter to ensure his department was adequately staffed.

Mr. Lundy said there were four areas where requests had been made at the hearings with Departments on May 31, 2011 and by consensus of the Board, the budget ordinance would reflect these changes:

1. Mental Health Services – no change in the dollar amount but a change in how the money was allocated.
  - a. Catawba County pays an amount per capita which matches what Burke County pays. On

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May 31, staff was told Burke County planned to reduce their funding by 5% - it is proposed that Catawba County would reduce its funding so that it matched Burke County's amount which would result in a \$18,000 reduction to the base amount.

b. Another way Catawba County funds Mental Health is a set amount to Catawba Valley Behavioral Health (CVBH) and Family Net. It is proposed that the \$18,000 reduction in the base amount be allocated to those agencies - \$9883 to CVBH and \$8,086 to Family Net.

**2. Elections.**

The State has paid the maintenance on voting equipment for the past year. The State proposes to continue that this budget year. The maintenance cost is approximately \$50,000. It is proposed that \$50,000 be put in a contingency fund for this maintenance should the State not follow through with this funding. If the State does cover this expense, the money in contingency will not be spent.

**3. Register of Deeds.**

There is a need to redact personal information (such as social security numbers) from documents in the Register of Deeds office. It is recommended that \$30,000 be added back to the budget for this purpose and that should cover redaction of documents for the last 20 years.

**4. Historical Association – The Historical Association's funding has been reduced by 5% and it is recommended that the County's support to the Association be increased by \$2500.00**

The total amount of recommended additional funding to the budget is \$82,500.

Chair Barnes then asked if any Commissioner had anything to add before the Budget Ordinance was prepared.

Commissioner Isenhower said he had expressed his concerns about the funding for the EcoComplex. He felt this should be supported by private programs versus public funds and that the EcoComplex was not a function of government.

Chair Barnes stated that she disagreed and the EcoComplex provided jobs – not just at the complex but through research and educational opportunities and was important to economic development. She said the partnership with universities at the Complex extended to partnerships with our educational institutions in the County.

Commissioner Hunsucker said he agreed that the EcoComplex should be supported by private programs but the private sector could not support it now as it wasn't profitable. He felt the County's support was in some ways being pushed by the Federal Government and we needed to take advantage of the grant funding that was being made available for this endeavor now. While it was not self-sustainable currently, it could be in the future based on what we were accomplishing now.

Commissioner Hunsucker then asked the amount of funding that would be required to support the Cooperative Extension position. Mr. Lundy indicated it would be \$11,208. Commissioner Hunsucker made a motion to include that funding amount in the budget. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Isenhower then resumed his discussion regarding the EcoComplex and made a motion to remove three items of funding from the budget - \$300,000 for EcoComplex & Resource Recovery Facility; \$150,000 for the Crop Processing Facility and \$100,000 for the Wood Gasification Facility. Commissioner Isenhower voted in favor; Commissioners Barnes, Lail, Hunsucker and Beatty voted opposed. The motion did not carry.

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County Manager Lundy said the agreed upon changes would be made and the final Budget Ordinance would be ready for the Board on Monday, June 6, 2011.

4. The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

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Katherine W. Barnes, Chair  
Board of Commissioners

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Barbara E. Morris  
County Clerk